



PROMOTING VACCINE CONFIDENCE : Dispelling Vaccine Myths

Professor Emeritus Lulu C Bravo MD

University of the Philippines Manila

30 Nov 2023 Phil Press Institute

Dr. Lulu C. Bravo , MD



- Executive Director and Founding President, Philippine Foundation for Vaccination
- Professor Emeritus, Pediatric Infectious and Tropical Diseases, University of the Philippines College of Medicine (2016)
- Convenor, Vaccine Study Group, National Institutes of Health (1998)
- PRC Outstanding Professional in Medicine (2018)
- Asian Outstanding Pediatrician (2012) PPS MOP (2022)
- Dr. Jose Rizal Memorial Awardee for Academe (2011)
- PMA Outstanding Physician (2009)
- UP-PGH Pediatric Centennial Awardee for Outstanding Researcher(2015)
- UPMAS Outstanding Researcher (2022) UPAA Distinguished Alumna for S & T (2023)
- Pneumonia Fighter Awardee from USA's Just Actions (2018)
- Published more than 100 scientific articles and books Nationally and Internationally
- Fellowship, University of Texas, Health Science Center (1986)
- Doctor of Medicine, College of Medicine, UP-Manila (1972)

DISCLOSURE

- **UNDERTAKEN RESEARCHES AND VACCINE TRIALS FOR
UP MANILA FROM :**

GSK NOVARTIS SEQIRUS TAKEDA SANOFI

PFIZER SSI (AJ BIOLOGICS) CLOVER GREEN CROSS LIVSON

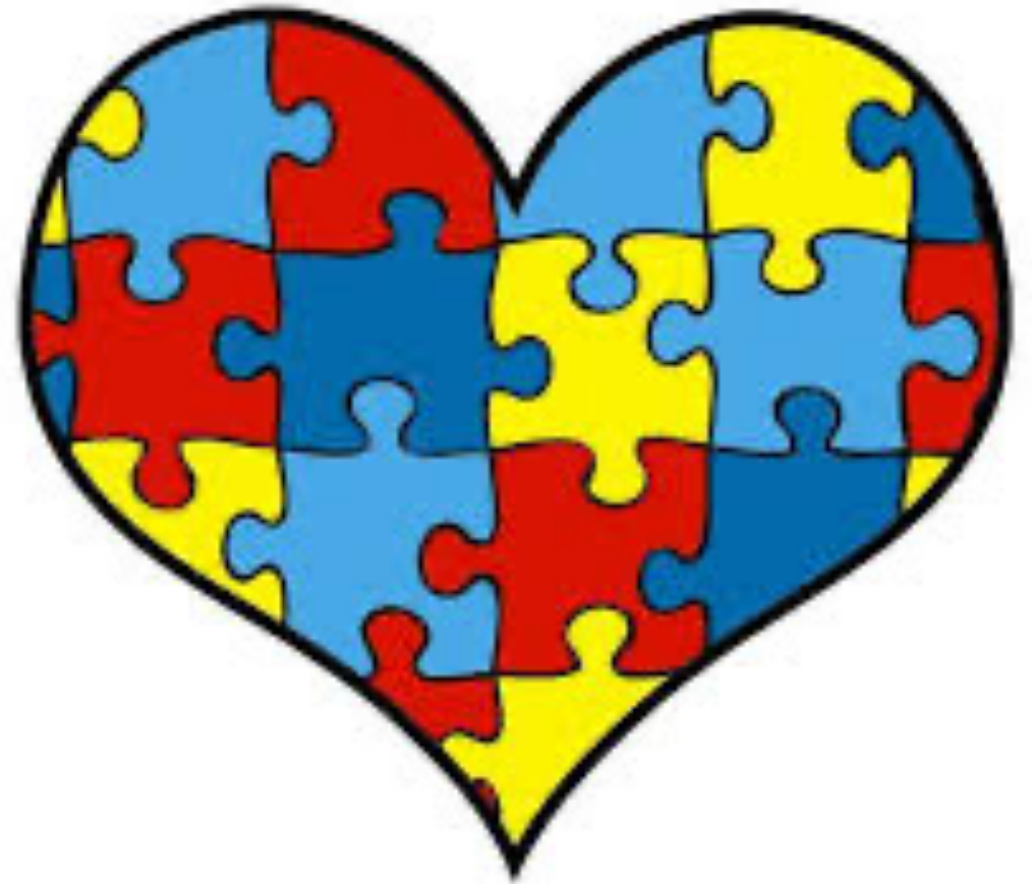
MYTH: Receiving a vaccine can cause autism

Answer:

NOT TRUE...

The doctor , Dr Andrew Wakefield, who first reported this in 1998 after more than 10 years of investigation was found to have done dubious procedures and had his license removed from UK. He transferred to US where he started his anti-vaccine activities engaging others whose interests remain questionable.

There are now **12 organized groups in the USA spreading disinformation about vaccines.**



MYTH: Receiving a vaccine can affect my fertility

Answer:

NOT TRUE...

In 230 years of giving vaccines since 1798 in UK, there is **no evidence that proves this**.

In the Philippines, we have one of the highest fertility rates in the world, noting that since 1976, DOH has been administering vaccines to millions of children(reaching a coverage of 90-100%) before 2018. Our population has more than doubled or even tripled in the last 50 years.



MYTH: The ingredients in vaccines are dangerous

Answer:

NOT TRUE ...

Health Scientists and experts study vaccines to save lives , insure safety and efficacy of vaccines and continue to do research to improve.

There are **always other experts to check each other for their accuracy and reliability.**



MYTH: Receiving a vaccine can cause disability and death

Answer:

NOT TRUE.. Clinical trials are done on vaccines to insure its safety. Any sign , that may cause a safety concern can lead to discarding a vaccine at any point during its long process of development.



MYTH: Better hygiene and sanitation are actually responsible for decreased infections, not vaccines

Answer:

Partially true..

BUT only for diseases that are caused by a contaminated or dirty water/food that are taken.(E.coli, Dysentery , not Rota though)

Many diseases are airborne and the germs are inhaled and settle in various body parts. (TB, Pneumonia, Meningitis)

Vaccines protect even when both routes of transmission occur.



MYTH: Infant immune systems can't handle so many vaccines

Answer:

NOT TRUE..

God gave human beings **a very complicated immune system that can defend itself from thousands and millions of germs and bugs that exist around us.** But the devil placed extraordinary ones that challenge the system so we must be careful!!

And unfortunately not everyone has a normal immune system.



MYTH: Adults do not need vaccines because they're stronger

Answer:

NOT TRUE..

Children with less mature immune system are most vulnerable to diseases but parents and adults can protect them if they are themselves vaccinated or immune. They can protect the children by not transmitting the disease to them.



MYTH: The natural immunity I get from being sick with a disease is better than the immunity I get from vaccination

Answer:

Partially true for some diseases like measles but there's a high risk of dying from getting the disease which you don't get from being vaccinated.

NOT TRUE IN COVID .. Partial protection from natural disease is achieved but vaccination will offer greater protection especially with variants coming in.



MYTH: Researchers rushed the development of the COVID-19 vaccine, so its effectiveness and safety can't be trusted

Answer:

NOT TRUE ... that the safety and efficacy were disregarded or compromised.

True that everything HAD TO BE RUSHED because thousands and millions of people are dying and the need to put together clinical trials, put in billion dollar resources and hundreds of scientists and experts had to work non-stop to test the vaccines to make it safe and efficacious for the world.

Working together led to the Success of Vaccine development towards ending the pandemic !!!



MYTH: Receiving a vaccine can make you magnetic

Answer:

NOT TRUE ...

Maybe even absurd..

No evidence whatsoever can prove this.



MYTH: My neighbor's friend has a relative who had an adverse reaction to a vaccine. It must be true.

Answer:

Adverse Events following Vaccination or AEFI are part of ALL VACCINE PROGRAMS which the government is responsible in establishing together with help from Experts. Information like this cannot be proven true until proper investigation by the experts have been accomplished.

Adverse events happen daily with or without vaccination.



MYTH: My social media feed is telling stories about the bad effects of a vaccine. It must be true.

Answer:

TRUE.. that social media is full of stories telling about vaccine bad effects but are they TRUE?

Organized anti-vaxxer groups are responsible for thousands of these stories but unless the story is verified by experts and DOH, these should not be shared to reduce disinformation and fake news.



MYTH: All events reported to the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System are caused by vaccination

Answer:

NOT TRUE...

Majority of the AEFIs reported are coincidental and a few are needing further investigation. Those related to vaccines such as allergy, anaphylaxis or side effects causing hospitalization, can be compensable under the law.



10 facts on the benefits of vaccines



1 Vaccines can protect against related diseases.

Measles vaccination protects against multiple complications such as dysentery, bacterial pneumonia, and malnutrition.



2 Vaccines extend life expectancy.

In the USA, elderly individuals given influenza vaccine had 20% less chance of suffering heart disease and stroke, and 50% lower risk of dying from other causes.



3 Countries save costs through vaccination programs.

Prevention of sickness and deaths translates into long-term cost savings, estimated globally to be of the order of tens of billions of US dollars.

10 facts on the benefits of vaccines



④ Some vaccines prevent cancer.

In Taiwan, Hepatitis B immunization reduced new cases of liver cancer to 25 to 30%, compared to figures before introduction of the vaccine in the national immunization program.



⑤ Vaccines enhance equity.

A study in Bangladesh showed that in the absence of measles vaccination, children from the poorest class were more than twice as likely to die compared to children from the higher socioeconomic groups.



**World Health
Organization**

Representative Office
for the Philippines

10 facts on the benefits of vaccines



6 Vaccines prevent the development of antibiotic resistance.

Introduction of a conjugate pneumococcal vaccine for infants in the USA in 2000 saw a 57% decline in invasive disease caused by penicillin-resistant strains.



7 Vaccines promote safe travel and mobility.

In the Muslim Hajj, local authorities require that pilgrims receive meningococcal vaccination and recommend other vaccinations such as influenza and hepatitis B. This measure prevents the possible spread of diseases in the largest annual human gathering in the world.



**World Health
Organization**
Representative Office
for the Philippines

10 facts on the benefits of vaccines



8 Vaccines empower women.

With improvements in infant and child mortality, women tend to opt for fewer children as the need to have many children to ensure that some will reach adulthood is reduced.



9 Vaccines promote peace.

There were at least seven vaccine-mediated ceasefires during civil conflicts in diverse parts of the world.



10 Vaccination contributes to economic growth.

The annual return on investment in vaccination has been calculated to be in the range of 12% to 18%, but the economic benefits of improved health continue to be largely underestimated.



**World Health
Organization**
Representative Office
for the Philippines

“Life or death for a young child too often depends on whether he is born in a country where vaccines are available or not”

- Nelson Mandela
Winner of the Nobel Peace Prize, 1993



Thank
you !

Text/ Photos Courtesy of:

Centers for Disease Prevention and Control

publichealth.org

hopkinsmedicine.org

Unicef

Vector/ Iconpacks